

**Department of Commerce  
Adopt-A-School Tutoring Program**

***Frequently Asked Questions***

Q. Is there a pre-arranged date and time each week for the tutoring session or can I work out a schedule that is convenient for me?

A. Each school has identified a pre-arranged schedule each week when the Commerce tutors visit their respective schools. All Commerce employees tutoring at their respective schools do so during the established schedule. The grades tutored and schedule is as follows:

Annandale Terrace Elementary School 7604 Herald Street Annandale, VA	Grades 3 - 5  Wednesdays 2:45 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
William Beanes Elementary School 5108 Dianna Drive Suitland, MD	Grades 3 - 6  Wednesdays 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Webb Elementary School 1375 Mt. Olivet Road, NE Washington, DC	Grades 3 - 6  Tuesdays 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Sousa Middle School 3650 Ely Place SE Washington, DC	Grades 6 - 8  Wednesdays 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Q. Do I have a choice in which school I can tutor?

A. We try to place tutors in the schools closest to their worksite. However, we ask that employees be also receptive to tutoring in other schools in need of their services, as the need arises. We encourage employees to volunteer to tutor at other locations closest to their homes, or where they are particularly interested in serving. We will make every attempt to accommodate transportation requirements.

Q. Please explain the transportation arrangements.

A. The Department leases a van for tutors from the Main Commerce Building who tutor at Webb Elementary School, since few employees have access to their vehicles. Arrangements vary for employees from the other bureaus tutoring at the three other schools.

Q. I sometimes have to travel for my job, necessitating that I miss a week of tutoring, *or* I oftentimes have to respond to last minute requests and deadlines, which would prevent me from tutoring during a week. Should I still apply?

A. That depends on the number of times you anticipate missing a tutoring session. Each student is assigned a tutor. Students come to depend on that one-on-one special relationship and attention from a tutor.

We know there will be times when the priorities and demands of work will necessitate missing a tutoring session once in a while. However, if you think your number of absences will preclude you from attending sessions regularly, you should not apply.

Q. I know that I will be on travel for 2 or 3 weeks straight, but will be available the rest of the school year. Can I apply?

A. Yes. As long as we – and your student – know in advance, we can make arrangements with a fellow tutor or two to take care of your student during this period.

Q. Can Commerce contractors serve as tutors?

A. Contracted employees are under different pay and leave provisions. Contracted employees are advised to consult their contractor, who will consult with the hiring Commerce office to determine workload demands. The contractor and government office will also make the determination regarding paid versus unpaid time to travel and conduct the tutoring. Should the contractor and the hiring office determine that the contracted employee can participate in this tutoring program, authorizing signatures, with titles, of both the contractor and an official from the hiring office need to be on the Tutor Application.

Q. How is the time commuting and actually tutoring handled with respect to absence away from the office and leave?

A. Since the Adopt-A-School Program is an integral part of the Department's Strategic Initiatives and Human Capital Planning Program, participating in it **is directly related to the DOC mission**. Employees serving as tutors are granted excused absence for the travel time and time conducting a tutoring session. Excused absence is any approved absence from duty without loss of pay and without charge to an employee's leave.

The Department of Commerce policy on excused absence for volunteer activities, as provided in the Department's Leave Handbook, **Excused Absence, Absence for Volunteer Service**, is as follows:

*Employees may be granted excused absence of short duration for volunteer service if such service:*

- *is directly related to the Department's mission;*
- *is officially sponsored or sanctioned by the Secretary; or*
- *will clearly enhance the professional development or skills of the employee in his or her current position.*